

MONTANA

Department of Commerce

EXHIBIT 3
DATE 3/31/09
SB 343

MONTANA PROMOTION DIVISION

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March 31, 2009

Chairman Jopek and House Agriculture Committee Members
State Capitol
PO Box 200801
Helena MT 59620-0801

Dear Chairman Jopek and Committee Members:

The Tourism Advisory Council requests that you vote in approval of SB 343, The Montana Invasive Species Act.

The quality of our pristine waters is one of the top reasons visitors come to Montana. These visitors annually contribute \$3 billion dollars into the Montana economy. Invasive species like zebra mussels and quagga mussels not only cause enormous economic damage to hydropower facilities, drinking water systems, boats, and docks but would also have tremendous economic implications for the tourism industry.

Because these invasive species filter out the food sources that sustain our world-class fisheries, the web of life would be forever disrupted. Fishing is not only an important part of the treasured Montana way of life, but also brings significant dollars into the State every year from the expenditures of non-resident fishermen. The Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, has published a report on Montana's Outfitting and Guiding Industry which details the significant expenditures made by these fishermen.

We feel this issue is vital to ensure the continued exceptional quality of Montana's bodies of water. The Montana Tourism Advisory Council requests that you strongly support SB 343.

Thank for your support of this important legislation.

Respectfully,



Stan Ozark, Chair
Tourism Advisory Council